

# Content Standards Informer

Curriculum and Instruction Unit

November 2009



## In This Issue

### Revision of Communication Arts Content Standards

It is an important time for communication arts in the state! For the past year the standards have been undergoing the revision process. A group of Montana's educators (K-20) was brought together over four separate weekends to review and revise the 1998 Montana Communication Arts Content Standards. The team looked at standards from other states, national standards frameworks such as the National Council of Teachers of English, current research in the field, and information gathered from a Montana focus group to create the new document. The new standards have gone out for review to Montana educators outside of the revision team, and two surveys were conducted to gain feedback. The end result is a clear and concise document that provides five standards: speaking and listening, reading, literature, media literacy, and writing. Within each of the five standards are benchmarks that define expectations for students' knowledge and skills at grades four, eight and upon graduation. You can find a copy of the draft standards on the communication arts Web page located on the Office of Public Instruction Web site; [http:// www.opi.mt.gov /CommunicationArts/index.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/CommunicationArts/index.html) .The document is being brought before the Montana Board of Public Education at the November meeting to begin the adoption process. Have a happy Thanksgiving!

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### Research Supports Strategies for Teaching High-ability/High-Potential Students

Dr. Sally M. Reis of the University of Connecticut recently prepared a position paper for the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) listing facts that we know to be true about gifted education. She limited this list to include only conclusive statements that can be supported by many years of research findings about gifted education. Here are five of her nine findings:

1. The needs of gifted students are generally not met in American classrooms where the focus is most often on struggling learners and where most classroom teachers have not had the training necessary to meet the needs of gifted students.
2. Grouping gifted students together for instruction increases achievement for gifted students, and in some cases, also increases achievement for students who are achieving at average and below average levels.
3. The use of acceleration results in higher achievement for gifted and talented learners.
4. Classroom teachers can learn to differentiate curriculum and instruction in their regular classroom situations and to extend gifted education strategies and pedagogy to all content areas.
5. Gifted education programs and strategies are effective at serving gifted and high-ability students in a variety of educational settings and from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic populations. Gifted education pedagogy can also reverse underachievement in these students.

Read the entire NAGC position paper, "[Research That Supports the Need for and Benefits of Gifted Education](#)." The position paper includes references to the research studies that support each of the conclusions listed above.

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### Science Resources on the OPI Web Site

Montana is proud to be home to "America's Top Young Scientist" Marina Dimitrov of Bozeman. Marina was recently awarded this title as winner of the 2009 Discovery Education/3M Young Scientist Challenge. Student competitions such as this are one way to foster student interest in science and implement content standards in new and exciting ways. If you would like more information about this competition or other science education resources please visit the OPI Science Web page at: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Science.html> . You can also find information on standards, assessment, inquiry, safety, grants, professional development, and more.

### Montana Youth Restoration Partnership (MYRP)

MYRP is a collaborative effort among Montana's state agencies, educators, private industries, conservation districts and watershed organizations. MYRP is committed to increasing the opportunities for Montana students to both learn about and work toward repairing degraded landscapes across the state. The first step in realizing this vision is to identify all existing environmental restoration programs throughout Montana and the level of interest in creating new youth restoration programs. Your local knowledge is an essential part of this effort. Your participation is needed in a 10-minute electronic survey. Please complete the survey by November 15, 2009. You can access the survey by following this link: <http://dnrceeducation.limequery.com/index.php?sid=32337&lang=en>

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### Technology and Information Literacy/Library Media Performance Rubrics

On October 1-3, a group of K-12 teacher librarians and technology specialists gathered in Helena to write Performance Rubrics for the revised Technology and Information Literacy/Library Media Content Standards and Essential Learning Expectations. The group began a draft document that describes Advanced, Proficient, Nearing Proficiency and Novice learners at each grade level. When finalized in the spring of 2010, these performance rubrics may be used to assess how well students apply the knowledge and skills identified in the standards, benchmarks and Essential Learning Expectations. Look for Word and pdf versions of the Performance Rubrics to be posted on the OPI Content Standards Web page: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Accred/cstandards.html>.

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Catalog Records for  
Indian Education  
For All Resources

Thanks are extended to Roberta Gebhardt at the Montana Historical Society for cataloging and uploading records to OCLC for materials distributed to schools by the OPI Indian Education Division. Cheri Bergeron, OPI Resource Center Librarian, recently contacted Roberta in response to many requests for OCLC records to be created for all of the Indian Education For All resources. Many thanks to both Cheri and Roberta for getting this accomplished.

Montana School  
Librarians  
Networking  
Opportunities

If you are interested in the School Library Media Division (SLMD) Listserv, a low volume and informative list, please e-mail Colet Bartow, [cbartow@mt.gov](mailto:cbartow@mt.gov). I will add you to the list. Subscription options include a daily digest version to lessen the impact on your inbox.

Follow Colet on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/cbartow>) for informative links and resources for school libraries, information literacy and school improvement.

Or join the Montana School Library Media Specialists Facebook group. <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=45391221569>

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The State of  
Montana  
Mathematics  
Education Forum

Eighty educators from across Montana joined their colleagues to learn more about Montana K-12 Standards-Based Education. Participants listened to a district's journey toward standards-based education, examined the differences being made through a showcase of some K-12 and postsecondary collaboration projects, and worked collaboratively with colleagues during the Forum. The PowerPoints, summaries, graphics, articles, and discussions captured from the forum are available on the MT-Math-Forum Wiki found at: <http://mt-math-forum.wikispaces.com/>. Please join the Wiki and participate in the discussions.

Mathematics  
Essential Learning  
Expectations

The revised Mathematics Standards/Benchmarks and Performance Descriptors were adopted by the Board of Public Education, September 12, 2009. The implementation of these standards requires content, process, proficiencies, and principles. The document *Vision for Montana Mathematics* describes all of these components. Essential Learning Expectations (ELE) indicate the learning progression at each grade level necessary to reach the desired benchmarks. The final draft of the ELE will be available in February. Mathematics Content Standards and Performance Descriptors, *Vision for Montana Mathematics*, and other resources can be found at: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Math/index.html>.

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